



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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June is “Leave No Child Inside” Month in Illinois

IDNR Encourages Youth to Spend Time Outside to Explore, Discover

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today proclaimed the month of June as *Leave No Child Inside* Month in Illinois. Throughout the month, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is encouraging young people to spend more time outdoors enjoying natural resources and participating in *Leave No Child Inside* events scheduled across the state.

“Here in the Land of Lincoln, we have some of the most beautiful natural sites in the country – from our state parks to our lakes and rivers,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “It is important for children to turn off the television, put down their video games and get outdoors to learn about nature in a truly interactive classroom. We must teach our youth to be stewards of the environment to ensure its splendor for generations to come.”

To celebrate *Leave No Child Inside* Month, Chicago Wilderness and the IDNR will host free family events to help connect kids with nature. Children can participate in activities such as archery, climbing, fishing, bird watching, fort building and learning how to set up a campsite.

“Leave No Child Inside Month events are designed to bring families together around enriching experiences in nature and inspire the curiosity that leads to a life-long connection to the natural world,” said Melinda Pruett-Jones, Executive Director, Chicago Wilderness.

The *Leave No Child Inside* initiative was launched in 2007 to get more children outside and to increase the amount and quality of time that they spend there. Children benefit from access to the outdoors in many ways. Studies show that when children spend time outdoors feelings of anxiety and depression decrease, concentration and performance at school improves and they gain an early appreciation and love of nature. The exercise that

comes with outdoor play and recreation improves weight loss, lowers high blood pressure and contributes to an overall improvement in physical health and fitness.

Illinois Free Fishing Days will be held statewide June 10-13. For a full list of *Leave No Child Inside* events and activities, visit www.kidsoutside.info or www.dnr.illinois.gov/calendar/Pages/default.aspx.

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